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as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 136–137.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the preposession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 134.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, employed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee, still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during these years, was a part of Haiti.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the elite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the elite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."